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## Emergency Preparedness

The safety of students within an educational environment is always one of the most important factors that must be accounted for within schools. High school campuses can consist of over a thousand students all in the same concentrated area, which makes school a place where many potential dangers can arise: it is only logical to be well prepared to maintain a level of security. Every school has relatively the same district regulations that provide the basic standards of protection, enabling a safe environment for the student body within their grounds. However, as parents place their children in the hands of the administration within the facility, responsibility for the welfare of the students are in the hands of the school itself. Extra precautions can be made in the effort, by the school, to prepare for harmful scenarios that go beyond districts emergency preparedness plan. For every school, an emergency preparedness plan will always vary due to special circumstances but all steps are taken in effort to maintain a stable and functional environment for adolescence to learn. At Washington High School, the staff are well aware of the actions that need to take place during a natural disaster such as a fire or a more threatening or violent situation like a bomb threat on campus.

Before any dangerous natural accident can occur such a fire, defenses against such event is always readily available. All rooms containing combustible or high heat products such as the Culinary Arts, Chemistry and the cafeteria are equipped with a sprinkler system along with an exhaust hood for safe removal of flammable gases. To avoid chaos, the

students are also well prepared and know where to get to safety if the condition calls for it by practicing fire drills every month within our school. If a fire were to break out on the grass fields, where students would have originally been evacuated to, the staff would direct groups of students to another specific location as fire fighters work to tame the fire. The staff is very flexible and adaptive to every problem because Washington staff exercises table top activities where scenarios with difficult conflicts involving the safety of the students are solve using strategy on the spot. For every accident, Washington is also able to contact all the parents of the students on the event that took place by utilizing their emergency dialer system, informing the parents of the situation within just fifteen minutes. While on school campus, many of the most dangerous situations are those that are unexpected and can have an effect on a huge population of students. Bomb threats do not commonly take place throughout most schools, but the teachers at Washington High remain alert and have plans for this violent setting. The supervisors of the school take tactic classes through FEMA to prepare for surprising incidents that can take place on during school hours. Before informing the student body about the threat, the staff has to consider the legitimacy of the warning before many hasty decisions. If proven as a genuine possibility, the bomb squad may be called in search for the device. If found on campus, the emergency plan states three designated sites as “safe zones” for the evacuation of students and staff away from the bomb.

These sites cannot be disclosed to the public, including me, due to more safety reasons. In case of injury, all coaches have been trained in emergency aid with a full time nurse to provide care before the ambulance arrives. Due to the unpredictability of threatening events, Washington even has lunch time drills to maximize safety for its students.

Personally, I think my schools emergency preparedness plan is well thought out and extremely thorough. For the preparations on natural disasters such as fires, I thought the plan successfully incorporated basic regulations of safety that would avoid the creation of burn victims. The school has a place where students can safely relocate to and a way to counter act the fire and subdue the blaze. Lastly, the staff is well qualified to care for any minor injuries and the students are equally as prepared for the situation through training. For the bomb threat, I believed that the school is prepared for both the physical device on campus and the potential of it on school grounds. There is a process in which the staff makes a rational decision based on the facts they are given during a bomb threat during lock down. Students will not risk staying in school grounds as the bomb gets defused and are moved far away for the threat. After my interview with Principal Lippert about two specific parts of emergency preparedness, I began to realize that I have always felt secure being in my classes. Within my school, there is a guard house directly by the gate that is constantly monitored by a faculty member, allowing only those who belong to enter. My school even took precautions such as having all the doors on campus installed with a peep hole so people can recognize who it is on the other side and are to be remained locked during school hours. It is obvious that the campus is equipped to handle any situation.